Dress and Ornament of Mithilā

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Mithilā or Videha (formerly a part of Vijji or Vrijji confideracy was bounded by the Kauśikī or Kośī river on the east, by the Sadānīrā or Gaṇḍakī on the west, by the Gaṅgā on the south and by the Himālayas on the north. This area is represented to-day by the districts of Muzaffarpur, Vaiśāli, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Champaran, Saharsa, north Bhagalpur and parts of Monghyr and Purnea districts.[1] Mithilā has given an unbroken continuity of life and pattern of culture since time immemorial, and as such it has a long historical tradition. The security and seclusion on account of its geographical features are responsible for the evolution of a somewhat characteristic culture popularly known as 'Mithilā Culture.'

The earliest reference to Mithilā is found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* where its ancient boundary is mentioned.[2] The Epics and the Purāṇās also contain numerous references to this kingdom. In the Vedic texts, reference has been made to Janaka, the great philosopher king of Videha and contemporary of Yājñavalkya, Uddālaka and Āruṇi.[3] Videha is frequently mentioned in the Buddhist literature. But a continuous history of this kingdom is noticed from the Mauryan period when it became a part of the Magadha kingdom. It was prosperous even in the Śuṅga period but very little is known about this country in the Kuṣāṇa period. However, it appears to have regained its popularity in the Gupta and Pāla periods. It came under the Karṇāṭas of Mithilā between 1097 A. D. and 1326 A. D. Thereafter, between 1325 A. D. and 1525 A. D. it was ruled over by the Oinwāras.[4] Its glory and fame continued even in the

1 For details see Upendra Thakur, *History of Mithilā*, chap. 1.

2 Mishra Jayakanta, *A History of Maithili Literature*, vol. I, p. 1; U. Thakur, *op. cit*.

3 Roy Chaudhary, H. C., *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 44.

4 For details see U. Thakur, chaps. V-VI.

medieval and modern periods of Indian history. Even now it is one of the richest and prosperous regions of the State of Bihar. It has given birth to eminent philosophers and poets. Sir George Abraham Grierson has, therefore, rightly observed about Mithilā that "traditions could grow unhampered and the literary pursuits in different directions continued unabated through the ages."[5] A rich cultural heritage and a sound political background, therefore, helped very much to the people of Mithilā in maintaining a distinct individuality in the nature and style of dress and ornament.

It is very difficult to say about the exact area and name of Videha or Mithilā region in the pre-historic times. But if we include Bhagalpur and Monghyr in this region then on the basis of the pre-historic finds discovered from these areas (particularly from Bhimbandh and Kharagpur in the district of Monghyr and from Oriup in the district of Bhagalpur), it may be suggested that probably the pre-historic people also lived in this region. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, it was inhabited by the *Kirātas* who are referred to in the *Mahābhārata*. But we do not get any evidence of these people in the present Ḍarbhanga and Vaiśālī districts which are regarded as the epi-centre of the Mithilā culture. The antiquities also discovered from other parts of the Mithilā region do not throw any light on the dress and ornament worn by the pre-historic people of this region. It is just possible that they might not have been using any dress and ornament like the pre-historic people of other areas. The terracotta female figurine representing mother goddess from Oriup (Bhagalpur) does not show the use of dress and ornament and as such it strengthens the above theory that no dress was worn by them. Even then the possibility of the use of bark garment by the people of this period cannot be ruled out as there are numerous references to the use of bark garments in the literature of the later periods of this region which may point out to a long tradition of the use of this particular garment.

The name of Videha (Mithilā), no doubt is referred to at many places in the Vedic literature but there is no specific mention of the dress and ornament worn by the people of this area. Probably Yājñavalkya belonged to Videha but even he does not mention about the dress and ornament of this

5 Roy Chaudhary, P. C., *Dist. Gaz., Darbhanga*, p. 24.

region. However, there are numerous references in the Vedic literature to the use of dress and ornaments by the people of north-eastern India and as Mithilā was a part of it, quite likely similar dress and ornament were also worn by the people of this region.

In the Vedic period *vastra*,[6] *vāsas*[7] and *vasana*[8] were the common terms used for clothes. The *vāsas* had usually one *nīvi* and it was always tied or girt which implied tucks and knots. It covered only lower part of the body. The upper part of the body was, however, covered by the another garment which was either a wrapper (*uttarīya*) or a jacket, or a bodice or cloak-like garment.[9] Sometimes an over garment called *adhivāsa*[10] was also used by the princes. For denoting special types of garments we get terms such as *drapi*[11] (gold embroidered vest), *peśas*[12] (gold embroidered cloth with artistic and intricate designs). *Pratidhi* (breast cover or a part of bride's attire made up of one or two stripes of cloth drawn across or crosswise on the bust and tied at the back). In the Mithilā region even now men wear *dhotī* and *dupaṭṭā* while women wear *sāṛī* and bodice or breast-cover as upper and lower garments. The aristocratic people, however, wear embroidered coat and dyed garments on special occasions. Thus we find continuity of the Vedic tradition in Mithilā particularly in respect of dress and ornament. The term *uṣṇīṣa*[13] occurs in the *Yajurveda*, the *Atharvaveda*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Pañchaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* in connection with the vrātyas and kings, whose *uṣṇīṣa* was as bright as day. According to the Kātyāyanī Śrauta Sūtra[14] the *uṣṇīṣa* was tied with a tilt and cross winding, but the kings on the occasion of sacrifice tied it in a special manner; the ends were gathered together and tucked away in front so as to

6 *A. V.*, V. 13; IX. 5. 25; XII. 3. 21.

7 *Ait. Brā.*, I. 3.

8 *Chhā. Up.*, VIII. 8.5; Kau. Up., II. 15.

9 Motichandra, *Costume, Textile, Cosmetics and Coiffure*, p. 8.

10 *R. V.*, I. 140; X. 5. 4.

11 *Ibid.* I. 166. 10; I. 25. 13; *A. V.*, XIII. 3. 1.

12 *R. V.*, IV. 30. 7; R. V., II. 3. 6; A. V., XIV. 1. 7.

13 *A. V.*, XV. 2. 1; *Śat. Brā.* III. 3. 2. 3; *Pañch. Brā.* XIII. 14.

14 *Kat. Sr.* XXI. 4.

cover them up. Probably the head-dress was not worn by women but at one place *Indrāṇī* has been described as wearing *uṣṇīṣa*.[15] Even now the head-dress called *pāga* is very popular among the people of Mithilā which may indicate that still they are maintaining the old tradition, only some change has taken place in the nature and mode of wearing it. Further, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* which is said to have been composed in Mithilā informs us that the clothes were dyed in different colours such as yellow, scarlet, red etc.[16]

In the Vedic period we get references to various kinds of clothing materials such as wool, silk, goat skin etc.[17] but cotton is not mentioned. The cloths manufactured out of these materials are mentioned by the terms *barāsi, darśa* or *dussa, kṣauma, pāṇḍava, tārpya, ajina* and *kambala*. Among these *barāsi* was manufactured from the fibres of the tree growing in the north-western and sub-Himalayan regions. This may correspond to *valakala* mentioned in the folk songs and literature of Mithilā. *Kṣauma* was a variety of silk cloth and it also occurs in the literature of Mithilā.[18] Further, Bhagalpur is still an important centre where silk is produced in huge quantity though it is not like the silk of *Kāśī*. *Tārpya*[19] is explained as modern *tasara* or rough silk of Bihar by S. C. Sarkar.[20] The commentators on the Kātyāyanī Śrauta Sūtra and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,[21] however, describe it as a linen garment. Whatever material may have been employed in manufacturing, it is a different question but it may be pointed out in this connection that in the Mithilā region *maṭakā* and *tasara* are manufactured even now and they resemble very much with the silk or linen. The *tasara* of Bhagalpur is still very popular. Therefore, it may be suggested that this variety was manufactured in Mithilā even in the Vedic times and it is continuing to the present day.

The Vedic people also used various types of ornaments and it seems that there was practically no difference in the male and female ornaments. The

15 *Śat. Brā*, V. 3. 5. 23.
16 *Comp. Hist. of Bihar*, vol. I., pt. I., p. 270 (Ed. Sinha, B. P.)
17 *R. V.*, VIII. 67. 3; A. V., XIV. 2. 66, R. V., I. 16 5. 10; Śat. Br. III. 9. 1. 12.
18 *V. R.*, p. 21.
19 *A. V.*, XVIII. 4. 31. (probably *Atharva Veda* was also composed in Mithilā.)
20 Sarkar. S. C., *Some Aspects of Earliest Social History of India*, p. 50, (footnote 5.)
21 *Vedic Index* I. p. 308 (foot note 3).

ornaments were worn on the neck, the ears, the head, the hands, and the waist. *Niṣkagrīva* and *rukma* were the neck ornaments, *karṇa–sovana* was ear-ornament, *khādihasta* and *parihasta* were hand ornaments, *mekhalā* and *raśanā* were waist ornaments while *kirīṭa* was head ornament.[22] If Atharva Veda is taken to be as a work of the Mithilā region then it may be suggested that these ornaments were worn by the people of Mithilā in the Vedic period.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* contain numerous references to Videha or Mithilā. *Sītā*, the main female character of the *Rāmāyaṇa* belonged to Videha. She was the daughter of Janaka, the king of Mithilā. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, therefore, furnishes valuable information about the dress and ornament of the people of Mithilā region. It seems that the types of dresses worn by the Vedic people continued in this period. Generally two garments, one for the upper part and the other for the lower part of the body were worn by men and women and they were called *uttarīya* and *nīvi*. Sometimes embroidered coat called *adhivāsa* was worn by rich persons while bodice and breast cover were used by noble ladies.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* the term *kṣauma* is noticed which denoted some kind of silk garment. King Janaka's marriage dowry to his daughter included blankets, silk or linen garments and ordinary cloth.[23] Sītā wore *kauśeya* (a variety of silk) in the royal palace of Ayodhyā[24]. Further, she has been described as wearing *pīta–kauśeya*[25] (another variety of silk) at *Pañchavaṭī* forest. In the *Aśoka* forest *Hanumāna* found her wearing an yellowish silk garment. Thus it may be inferred that *Sītā* was very fond of yellow silk garment and that there must have been a flourishing silk industry during the period in the Mithilā region, the place to which she belonged. Even now the silk garment is liked very much by the ladies of the aristocratic families of Mithilā. Moreover, the terms *kauśeya* and *kṣauma* referred to in the literature of Mithilā confirm the continuity of the use of these garments.

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22 *R. V.* I., 112. 14. I. 166. 10; V. 19. 3.; *A. V.*, VI. 81. 1. 2., VI. 133. 1, VIII. 6. 7.

23 *Rām.* Bāl. 74th Sarga.

24 *Rām.* Ayo. 37th Sarga.

25 *Rām.* *Āraṇya*. 47th, 52nd and 60th Sargas.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* also contains references to the use of various types of ornaments by men and women. The ornaments were worn on the neck, the ears, the hands, the fingers, the waist and the ankles. The neck ornaments were called *kaṇṭha-hāra*, *kāñchanamālā*, *hemasūtra* and *chandrahāra*.[26] The ear-ornaments were called *kuṇḍala* and *trikarṇa*.[27] The hand ornaments were known by the terms *valaya* and *karāvaṇa*.[28] The finger ornament was called *aṅgurīyaka*.[29] The waist ornament was, however, known by the terms *kāñchīdāma*, *kiṅkiṇī-māla* and *mekhalā*[30] while *nūpura*[31] was an ornament for the ankles and the feet. The different terms mentioned for one ornament probably denote different designs and types. Most of these terms are used in Mithilā for various types of ornaments.

The excavations conducted in the Mithilā region although do not throw sufficient light on the material culture and life of the people of this area, yet the crude variety of P. G. ware found at Vaiśālī may indicate that even in the Epic period it was a place of glory and on this basis it may be suggested that the ornaments and dress referred to in the Epic literature were worn by the people of this area as well.

It is almost an accepted fact that Mithilā was the seat of the Jainism and the Buddhism. Mahāvīra was born at Kundanagrāma, a village in Mithilā and he spent as many as six seasons there. The two other Tīrthāṅkaras, *Nemīnātha* and *Mallinātha* also were born in this region and attained supreme knowledge. Lord Buddha visited Vaiśālī thrice in his life time. Therefore the Buddhist and the Jaina literature contain numerous references to the material culture of the people of Mithilā, but it is very surprising that they do not give any specific account of the dress and ornament worn by the people of this region. However, it seems that spinning and weaving were well known to the people of this period. The threads were spun and woven

26 *Rām. Kiṣ.* 9th Sarga, 11th Sarga; Sun. 9th Sarga; *Laṅkā*, 65th Sarga.

27 *Rām. Kiṣ.*, 10th Sarga; Sun. 15th Sarga.

28 *Rām. Ayo.* 32nd Sarga, Sun. 9th Sarga.

29 *Rām. Sun.* 9th Sarga.

30 *Rām. Sun.* 9th Sarga, Ayo. 78th Sarga, Āraṇya. 52nd Sarga.

31 *Rām. Sun.* 9th Sarga.

out of textile fibres like linen, cotton, silk and hemp (*śana*).[32] Hemp is produced in Purnea district of Bihar which was formerly in the Mithilā region. We get references to weavers, their loom and the weaving appliances.[33] The Buddhist literature refers to finished textile goods of different varieties.[34] Most of these varieties of textile fibres are still manufactured in and around the Mithilā region. In the *Mahājanaka Jātaka* cotton, silk, linen and *koṭumbara* are mentioned,[35] while in anosher *Jātaka* women are described as producing very fine quality of thread and making a ball of it.[36] A survey of the life and culture of the people of Mithilā reveals that women of Madhubani and Samastipur still produce very fine quality of thread and they make a ball out of it. Thus it may be inferred that there was a flourishing textile industry in this region in the Buddhist period and it is still surviving in this area. *Jātaka* further informs us that the cloth of *Kāśī*[37] was very popular in this region and people used it on special occasions. The *Mahāvagga* mentions that Buddha allowed the use of *pravara* (a silken *chādara*) by the monks. *Kṣauma* (linen) was also very popular and is ordained as one of the cloths for making *civira* of the *Bhikkhus*.[38] Further it mentions about the manufacture of blankets. Such industries are also functioning in the district of Purnea which once formed a part of Videha territory. Now the blanket weaving is being carried on by small colonies of *gaḍeriās*.[39] In the Buddhist literature there are also references to *koṭumbara* which was either woolen or bark cloth[40]. *Vāhatika* was another variety of woolen cloth and it was sent by *Ajātaśatru* (the king of Magadha) to *Prasenajit* (the king of Kośala) in the 6th century B. C.[41] The *Mahāvagga*

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32 Agrawala. V. S., *India as known to Pāṇini*. pp. 125–26.
33 *Vinaya*. II. 135; D. N. I. 51; Jāt. I. 356, IV. 475.
34 *M. V.* V.. 103; D. N. I. 1. 15; M. N. I. 76; *Jāt*. V. 322.
35 *Mahājanaka Jāt*. VI. 47.
36 *Jātaka*. VI. 336.
37 *M. N.*, II. 3. 7.
38 *M. V.* VIII. 1. 36, VIII. 3. 1.
39 Roy Choudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gaz., Purnea*. p. 249.
40 Mahājanaka Jāt., VI. 47.
41 Motichandra, *Costumes, Textiles, Coiffure*, p. 12.

mentions that cloth was also manufactured from hemp or *śana*[42] while the Jātaka[43] refers to the use of *ajina* (animal skin) as clothing material. Hemp or *śana* may have been produced in Purnea (part of Videha territory) even in the Buddhist period and that some kinds of cloth were manufactured from it in this region. Further, we get references to the use of coloured and embroidered garments by the rich persons and garments with long borders, cut borders and embroidered borders by common people[44]. *Kañchuka* or bodice was used by noble ladies. There was very little difference in the dress of monks and nuns. It consisted of three garments namely *saṁghāṭī, antaravāsaka, uttarāsaṅga*. Sometimes they used to cover the entire body with one sweep of the garment. Their garments were dyed in yellow colour[45]. The nuns were allowed to wear bodice or *kañchuka*. The *Chullavagga*[46] says that *ghāgharā* was also used by women, which was something like a loin cloth. Some *Jātakas* refer to the use of even *sārī* which was called *saṭṭika*[47]. It was, however, worn by the princess and the queens. The *Mahāparinibbānasutta*[48] informs us that women of Vaiśālī decked themselves in matching colours when they learnt of the visit of Lord Buddha at the residence of *Ambapālī*. Thus people of Mithilā wore different types of dresses on different occasions in the Buddhist period. The head-dress must have been an important item of male attire but there is very little mention about it in the literature of this period.

The jeweller *(maṇikāra)*[49] and ornaments of gold are frequently mentioned in the Buddhist literature. The ornaments were used by both men and women. There were neck-ornaments of various types, ear-ornaments, head-ornaments, nose-ornament, hand ornaments, waist ornaments and leg ornaments. The head ornament was called *kirīṭa*,[50] the ear ornament was called

42 *M. V.*, VIII. 13. 1.
43 *Jat.*, VI. 500.
44 *M. V.* VIII. 29. 1.
45 *M. V.* VIII. 13.
46 *Chullavagga*. 10. 6.
47 *Jāt*. 3, 55, 324, 431.
48 *Mahāparinibbāna*. p. 54.
49 *Kuṇāla Jāt*. 536., *Vidura Jāt*. 545.
50 *Jat*. 511.

kuṇḍala,[51] the neck ornaments were known by the terms *niṣka*, *ratnadāma* and *ratnamaya graiveya*,[52] the nose ornament was called *unanta*,[53] the hand ornaments were *valaya* and *keyūra*,[54] the waist ornaments were *mekhalā* and *giṅgamaka*[55] while the leg ornaments were called *kiṅkiṇī*, *pālipāda* and *udghaṭṭana*.[56] It is interesting to note in this connection that some of the ornaments used by the people of Mithilā are even now known by the same terms. This is proved particularly by the folk songs of Mithilā. Moreover, Mithilā, Vaiśālī, Champā, Pāṭaliputra and Rājagṛha were regarded as prosperous cities and centres of industries and trade in the Buddhist and post-Buddhist poriods.[57] There were weavers and goldsmiths who were manufacturing various types of cloth and ornaments, most probably for the use of the people of these regions.

The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the accounts of Megasthenes no doubt throw light on the dress and ornament worn by the people of northern India in the Mauryan period, but nothing concrete is recorded about the people of Mithilā. However, inferences may be drawn by comparing the dress and ornament referred to in these accounts with the current practices, customs and available literature of Mithilā. Further, the terracottas, beads, amulets and ornaments discovered from the recent excavations at Vaiśālī, Nandana garh, Balirājagarh, Navalāgarh and Jaimaṅgalāgarh throw much light on the dress and ornament worn by the people of these areas in the Mauryan period.

Kauṭilya refers to various types of cloths like woolen, silk, cotton and bark. They were manufactured under the supervision of *Sūtrādhyakṣa*, the superintendent of weaving. The weaving of yarn was done by women of respectable families, widows, crippled women, mother of royal courtesans and old temple-maids.[58] Further, coloured and dyed garments were also produced. Even

51 *Jāt*. 542, 543.
52 *Jāt*. 547.
53 *Ibid.*
54 *Jāt*. 506, 539.
55 *Jāt*. 526, 531, 547.
56 *Jāt*. 501, 547.
57 Sinha. B. P., *Comp. Hist. of Bihar*, vol. I., pt. I., p. 287. (Ed.)
58 *K. A.* II. 23.

these days in Mithilā, the cotton and silk threads are spun by ladies of respectable families, widows and poor women. They have adopted it as a part of their daily life as well as their main occupation. Kauṭilya refers to different varieties of cloths such as *kṣauma, dukūla, karpāsa, śana, kauśeya, patrorṇa* and *chīnapaṭṭa*.[59] Kṣauma was either cotton or silk cloth. *Dukūla* was a linen cloth from Bengal or a kind of cloth made up of the bark of *dukūla* tree. *Karpāsa* was cotton cloth while *patrorṇa, kauśeya* and *chīnapaṭṭa* were different types of silk cloths. The best variety of *patrorṇa* was produced in Magadha, *puṇḍra*, and *suvarṇakuḍya* (Bengal).[60] It has been identified with *eri, muṅgā* or *maṭakā* silk.[61] This variety of cloth is still manufactured in the Mithilā or Tirhut region and they are regarded as valuable cloth. They are worn on special occasions. By this time most of the parts of Videha or Mithilā had come under the control of Magadha kingdom, and as such it is quite likely that even the Mauryan period or *Kauṭilya's* time it was produced in Mithilā. *Śana* or hempa was woven into ropes, canvas cloth or bags. It was spun into yarns mostly by women. As already stated above *śana* is produced mainly in the Purnea district and different varieties of cloths are manufactured out of it in and around this region. In ancient times it was a part of Mithilā and as such even in the *Kauṭilya's* time it may have been produced in this area. *Chīnapaṭṭa* was a variety of silk manufactured in China. It was popular among the people of Mithilā.

It seems that *dhotī*-like lower garment and *uttarīya* were worn by male persons while *sārī*-like lower garment was worn by females. The young girls wore skirt or *ghāgrā*. According to Megasthenes[62] "the Indians wear an undergarment of cotton which reaches below the knee half way down the ankle and also an upper garment which they throw partly over their shoulders and partly twist in folds round their head." We do not, however, get any specific reference to the dress worn by the people of Mithilā. Probably they wore the same types of dresses which were worn by men and women of Magadha. In the

59 *K. A.*, II. 23. 1., II. 23. 2, II. 15. 41, II. 23. 8., II. 11. 106, II. 11. 115, II. 11. 107-113, II. 11. 114; *JESHO.*, IV. pt. I. pp. 57, 59.

60 Sinha. B. P. (Ed), *Comp. Hist. of Bihar.*, ovl. I. pt. I. p. 687.

61 *K. A.* II., 11. 107-113.

62 Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of India*. p. 230.

circumstance, the dress represensed on the Patna *yakṣas*, Dīdārganj *yakṣiṇī*, terracotta figurines from Bulandibāgh, Kumrahār and Vaiśālī may throw some light on this problem. The *yakṣas* wear a *dhotī*-like lower garment and an *uttarīya*, while *yakṣiṇī* wears a *sārī*-like lower garment. The upper part of the body of the *yakṣiṇī* is, however, bare. The terracotta figurines show the use of skirt by girls.[63] Thus it may be suggested that the people of Mithilā also wore almost similar dresses in the Mauryan periods.

Kauṭilya refers to ornament of gold, silver and precious stones to be worn by people on different parts of the body.[64] Rich people adorned themselves with ornaments of ivory and decked their wrists and upper arms with bracelets of gold. Megasthenes says that merchants wore ear-rings. Probably different types of necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets and girdles were used by the people in this period.[65] Kauṭilya has given a list of various types of neck-ornaments that were manufactured under the supervision of *Suvarṇādhyakṣa*. There are references to the necklaces from one string of pearls to one thousand and eight strings of pearls, either inset with jewels or without them. Some of the important types were called *taralapratibandha, indrachhanda, vijayachhanda, hāra, ekāvali, ratnāvali*, and *sopānaka*.[66] It is interesting to note in this connection that most of these terms occur in the folk songs and literature of Mithilā, particularly in the *Varṇa Ratnākara* which may indicate that these ornaments were used by the people of Mithilā in the Mauryan period. The terracottas discovered from the Mithilā and Magadha regions also bear testimony to it.

Patañjali[67] speaks of the existence of the spinning industry and Manu[68] says that it was under the control of the State. The author of the Periplus[69]

63 Sahay, S. N., *Indian Cost. Coiff. and Orn.* pp. 4, 34; Altekar A. S. and Mishra V. K., *Kumrahar Excavation Rep.*, p. 112.

64 *K. A.* II. 11. 6-20.

65 Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of India.*, pp. 105, 130.

66 *K. A.*, 76-78, 89.

67 *Mahābhāṣya*. vol. I. p. 220.

68 *Manu.*, VIII. 397.

69 Schoff, *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, p. 47.

mentions that the finest muslin was manufactured in Dacca district.[70] According to the *Divyāvadāna*[71] various types of cloth were manufactured such as *paṭṭāṁśuka, chīna, kauśeya, karpāsa, kṣauma, dhautapaṭṭa, kambala, dusya, śanasati, puṣpapaṭṭa* etc. This list includes cotton, silk, wool and hemp textiles. The *Lalitavistara* adds one more variety namely *dukūla*. It seems that most of these varieties of cloths were known to the people of Mithilā and some of these varieties would have been manufactured by the people of this region.

In the Śuṅga and the Kuṣāṇa periods the male dress generally comprised of *dhotī*, tight *pāyojāmā* and drawer as lower garments while *dupaṭṭa* or *kañchuka* as upper garment.[72] The female wore *sārī* and *ghāghrā* or skirts as lower garment and *uttarīya* as upper garment. Patañjali[73] also confirms that two separate garments for the upper and lower parts of the body were used by the females, but he also says that sometimes they used to leave the upper part of the boby bare. Probably immature girls wore only a white skirt to cover the lower part of the body. The *Divyāvadāna*[74] refers to *sirottara-paṭṭakā* (turban) for the head, *kañchuka* (coat or *mirzai*) for the upper part of the body and loin–cloth for the lower part of the body. It may correspond to *pāga* and *mirzai* generally worn by the Maithila Brahmins. The art of dyeing was well known to the people of this period as there are numerous evidences of the use of coloured garments in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali.[75] The cloth was dyed in the different colours like red, yellow, blue and red. Among these the red coloured garments were regarded as most auspicious and people probably wore them on special occasions. It is interesting to note in this connection that in Mithilā even now red garments are used on the occasion of marriage. Therefore, the author of the *Mahābhāṣya* appears to have taken into account the customs and dress of Mithilā as well.

70 *Div.* pp. 215, 316, 463, 577.
71 *Lalitavistara*, p. 333.
72 Sahay, S. N. *Ind. Cost. Coiff. and Ornament*, pp. 13–14.
73 *Mahābhāṣya*, I. 1. 19.
74 *Div.* p 256, 415.
75 *Mahābhāṣya*, I 1. 45, I. 1. 27.

The *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali,[76] the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharatamuni[77] and the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana[78] give a long list of various types of ornaments worn both by men and women. The ornaments were worn on the head, the neck, the ears, the hands, the waist, the leg, the fingers and the nose. According to Patañjali ear-rings, *kirīṭa* and necklaces were more in use than the other types of ornaments. The neck ornaments were called *harṣaka, satasūtra, mālā, hāra, muktāvali, mauktika-hāra, vyalambahāra,* the ear-ornaments were *karṇābhūṣaṇa, kuṇḍala, kīla, śroṇisūtra,* the head ornaments were *mukuṭa, mauli, kirīṭa,* and *chuḍāmaṇi,* the hand ornament were *valaya, hastāvali, keyūra,* and *aṅgada,* the waist ornaments were *tarala* and *sūtra* while the finger ornaments were *aṅgulīya* and *mudrā*. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra* various types of neck ornaments worn by females were known by the terms *triveṇī, muktāvali, vyālapaṅktirmañjarī, ratnamālikā, ratnāvali, sūtra, hāra,* the ear-ornaments were called *kuṇḍala, patra karṇika, karṇamudrā, karṇotakīlaka,* and *karṇapūra,* the head ornaments were *chuḍāmaṇi, muktājāla,* the hand ornaments *valaya, barjura, hastapatra, (pachaṅgila or pahunchī),* the waist ornaments were *kāñchī* and *mekhalā*. While the leg ornaments were *pādapatra, kiṅkiṇī,* and *nūpuras*. Most of the terms for different types of ornaments in the above two texts are similar, still some differences are noticed. However, the terms mentioned in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* have resemblance with the terms noticed in the folk literature of Mithilā. It is quite likely that the author of the Nāṭyaśāstra may have included the names of different types of ornaments that were prevalent in the Mithilā region in the Śuṅga and Kuṣāṇa periods.

In the Gupta, the post-Gupta and the Pāla and Sena period i. e., from 319 A. D. to 1200 A. D. we have the literary accounts of Kālidāsa, Śudraka and Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the foreign accounts of Fa-hien, I-tsing, Hiuen-Tsang and the archaeological evidences. They afford ample material for the study of dress and ornament. Further the *Amarakośa* also furnished valuable informations about it. There is, however, no specific mention of the life and culture of the Mithilā but inferences may be drawn again on the basis of the descrip-

76 *Mahābhāṣya*. I. 3. 2.
77 *Nat*. XXIII. 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 83, 114, 135, 185, 207.
78 *Mahābhāṣya*. *Cost. Coiff. Orn.*, pp. 123–124.

tion given in these literary works and foreign accounts by comparing them with the archaeological evidences. But the works of Jyotirīśvara Kaviśekharāchārya and Vidyāpati which are regarded as the oldest work in the Maithili language throw considerable light on the life and culture of the people of this region, but they were written sometimes in the 13th and 14th centuries A. D. However, they corroborate the evidences of the Gupta and post-Gupta and Pāla-Sena periods regarding the dress and ornaments, and as such it may be suggested that these accounts include even the dress and ornaments worn by the people of the Mithilā region.

The *Amarakośa*[79] mentions various types of cloth such as *valka* (*kṣauma*), *phāla* (bark cloth), *kauśeya* (silk), *rāṅkava* (cloth made by animal's hair), *patrorṇa* (wild silk or silk spun by the insects feeding on the leaves of banyan and lakucha), *malaya* (Malabar silk), *aṁśuka* (smooth and shining cloth,) *chīnāṁśuka* (silk from China), *krimirāga* (silk produced from a kind of insect), *dukūla* (linen or cotton cloth), *kambala* and *rallaka*.

Kālidāsa is also said to be of the Mithilā region but it is a controversial matter.[80] However, it is almost certain that he was well acquainted with the state of Bihar as he refers to Aṅga, Videha and Magadha very frequently in his works. Probably Videha or Mithilā was a prosperous city in his time[81]. He knew about the *Kośī* river and refers to it as *Mahā-Kośī-prapāta*.[82] Whether Kālidāsa belonged to Mithilā or not is not so important a matter but the fact that he had a good knowledge of the life and culture of the people of Mithilā matters more as we can safely suggest on this ground that the descriptions of dress and ornament referred to in his works may be applicable even to the people of his region. Like the *Amarakośa*, the works of Kālidāsa also contain various types of clothing materials. They have been denoted by different terms but it seems that wool, silk, cotton, and hemp were generally used for manufacturing cloths. There were various types of dresses for different weathers

79 *Amar*. II. 6. 111. 112. 115.

80 Roy Chaudhary. P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Darbhanga*, p. 24.

81 *Raghu*., XI. 32-36, pp. 57-58.

82 *Kum*., VI. 33., p. 250.

and for different occasions. Further there are numerous references to the various kinds of coloured garments such as white, blue, red, saffron and black[83]. Silk was, however, preferred as against other varieties of cloth. The dress[84] of male persons generally comprised of three pieces of cloth namely *uttarīya* (upper garment), *nivasana* (lower garment) and *veṣṭana* or *uṣṇīṣa* (head-) dress); while the famale dress consisted of *nīvi* or *nivasana* (*sārī*-like lower garment), *uttarīya*, *stanāṁśuka* or *kurpāsika* (upper garment like bodice, *cholī* or breast cover). Generally the head was covered by one end of the lower garment but *Mālavikāgnimitram*[85] informs us about the use of *avaguṇṭhana* (veil which was a long piece of cloth something like *uttarīya*. It was an important item of the bride's attire. There was a separate wedding dress for the bridegroom. The ascetics or the monks wore saffron-coloured garments made up of the bark of trees.

Besides the clothing materials *Amarakośa* refers to various types of upper and lower garments. The *Āchārāṅgasutta* and the *Bṛahatakalpasūtrabhāṣya* also throw considerable light on these aspects of life. These accounts also refer to the use of three pieces of garments, namely upper and lower garments and a head-dress.

The *Vyavahārasūtra Bhāṣya*[86] mentions the name of the countries where cloths were manufactured but the name of Mithilā is not given. The *Mṛchhakaṭika* also contains references to different types of cloths and garments but there is nothing about Mithilā.

In the *Harṣacharita* of Bāṇabhaṭṭa[87] there is an interesting reference to the display of rich textile materials in the palace of Harṣa at the time of the marriage ceremony of his sister *Rājyaśrī*. It included *kṣauma* (linen), *dukūla* (cotton), *lālātantuja*, *netra* and *aṁsuka* (varieties of silk). Further there are references

83 *Raghu*. IX. 43, *Ṛtu*. VI. 21, *Kum*. III. 54, *Vik*. 188, *Vik*. IV. 17, *Ṛtu*. VI. 5, *Raghu*. XV. 77.

84 *Raghu*. XVI. 43, XIX, 41, VIII. 12, XIV, 41, VII, 9, *Śāk*. IV; *Kum*. VIII. 35, VII. 60; *Ṛtu*. IV. 17, V. 8, VI. 5. 61.

85 *Mal*. 18.

86 *Vya. Bha*. VII. 3

87 *Harṣacharita*., pp. 85, 125, 214.

to *puṣpapaṭṭa* (kinkhāb of Banaras) or heavy brocades. The presents sent by the rulers of Assam to Śrī Harṣa included birch bark or smooth silk.

The foreign accounts also furnish valuable informations regarding textile materials and garments used by the people of north-eastern India. Fa-hien[88] says that in the countries of Kośala, Śrāvastī and Pāṭaliputra, the silken streamers and canopies were used by the king and the common people. Muslin, cotton and silk were in general use but ordinary people wore coloured cotton clothes of a coarser texture. The medicants wore *trichivaraka* or three pieces of cloth (upper, lower and over garments) to cover the body. According to I-tsing[89] there was no prohibition in wearing silk garments by the monks and the nuns. They wore three pieces of clothes as referred to by Fa-hien. Hiuen Tsang[90] has, however, given a list of textile materials that were used for manufacturing different types of garments for the monks and the nuns. In this connection he refers to the use of *kauśeya, kṣauma, kambala* and *śāṇaka*. He further says that the monks wore *antarvāsaka* (inner garment), *saṅghāṭī*, *uttarāsaṅga* (upper garment) and *nivasana* (lower garment). The dress of the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas were, however, extra-ordinary in character.

It appears from the above literary and foreign accounts that they depict generally the life and culture of the people of north-eastern India. Since Mithilā formed an important part of it during the period it may be suggested that the same dresses were prevalent even in this region. There is no doubt that by this time a standardised type of dress had come to be settled for differerent grades of people in north-eastern India. The stone sculptures, bronzes and terracottas found from Vaiśālī, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur bear testimony to it. They show the use of transparent dresses which indicate that very fine quality of cloth was manufactured in the period.

Various types of ornaments were worn by men and women in the period. Kings wore necklaces, girdles, ear-rings, crowns and *tiaras*. Ordinary people

88 Fa-hien, *Record of the Buddhistic Kingdom*. pp. 57, 59, 79.

89 Takakasu, J., *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malaya Archipelago*. pp. 54, 55, 67-69, 72-73, 75-76.

90 Watters, *On Yuan Chwang Travels in India*., vol. I. pp. 120, 148-151, 301.

used very little ornaments while poor people practically wore no ornaments. But women generally wore much ornaments as is evident from the literary and foreign accounts of the period. Gold, silver, and precious stones of every available kind were always in demand for personal adornments. Fa-hien[91] says that the mendicants were not allowed to wear ornaments but Pāṭaliputra and Vaiśālī were the two important cities where different corporate guilds were functioning. He has clearly mentioned that gold, silver and gems were used by the people for making different types of ornaments. Yuan Chwang,[92] however, says that the dress and ornaments of the kings and the grandees were very extraordinary. Garlands and *tiaras* with precious stones were their head ornaments and their bodies were adorned with rings, bracelets and necklaces. Bracelets were also used by rich merchants. He also refers to the practice of making holds in the ears for wearing ornaments. The jewelled necklaces were very popular. The Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas wore bracelets and necklaces. No doubt he visited many parts of India but the main centre of his activities was Magadha which included Mithilā and as such the accounts of ornaments furnished by him may be applicable also for the Mithilā region.

If we accept that Kālidāsa belonged to Mithilā then his works are of great value for the study of dress and ornament of the people of Mithilā. Kālidāsa[93] mentions various types of neck ornaments such as, *niṣka, muktāvali, hāra, vaijayantikā, hemasūtra, mālā, kaṇṭhasūtra, ekāvali.* Bāṇa[94] has also used similar terms for the neck ornaments. Kālidāsa[95] refers to ear ornaments by the terms *karṇābhuṣana, karṇapūra, kuṇḍala, maṇi-kuṇḍala, kañchana kuṇḍala, karṇotpala, tāṭakka* while Bāṇa[96] describes them by the terms *karṇapūraka, karṇotpala, kuṇḍala* and *bālika.* Kālidāsa[97] mentions the head ornament by the terms

91 Fa-hien, *Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms*, pp. 89, 90.
92 Watters, *On Yuan Chwang Travels in India*, vol. I. p. 151.
93 *Kum.* II. 49; *Raghu.* 6. 8, II. 25. 49, V. 52. 70, VI. 14; *Vik.* I. 17, V. 2; *Ṛtu.* II. 25, *Śāk.* VI. 2.
94 *Kādambari* (Ed. P. V. Kane), *paras.* 130, 135, 137, 142, 153, 174, 181, 191, 204.
95 *Raghu.* V.I. 26,; *Ṛtu.* II. 20, III. 19, IV 6; *Kum.* IX. 23.; *Megh* (*u*) 11.
96 *Harṣa* (Fuhrer), pp. 51, 190; *Kād.* (Ed. P. V. Kane), *paras* 131, 182, 191, 194.
97 *Raghu.* IV. 19; *Kum.* VII, 94; *Ṛtu.* V. 5; *Śāk.* VII. 24.

chūḍāmaṇi, *kapālamaṇi* and *kirīṭa* while Bāṇa[98] mentions them by the terms *chūḍāmaṇi*, *lalāṭikā*, *mukuṭa* and *maṅgābharaṇa* (*maṅgaṭikā*). Kālidāsa[99] mentions *aṅgada*, *keyūra* and *valaya* as hand ornaments but Bāṇa[100] refers to them by the term *valaya* only. The Rāmacharita of Abhinanda,[101] however, has used the term *kaṅkaṇa* for the hand ornament. In fact they appear to be different varieties of hand ornaments. Kālidāsa[102] describes the waist ornaments by the terms *mekhalā*, *raśanā* and *kāñchī* but Bāṇa mentions only *mekhalā* and *raśanā*[103]. According to Kālidāsa[104] *kiṅkiṇī* and *nūpura* were the two varieties of leg ornaments but Bāṇa[105] adds two more types of this ornament namely *pādabharaṇa* and *neyūra*. The finger ornament was, however, called *mudrā* or *aṅgulīya*.[106] The variations in the name of the ornaments were probably because of the differences in the regional languages.

We have some authentic records of the cultural life of the people of Mithilā from 1300 A. D. onwards, when this region came under the Karnāṭas and the Oinwāras. Jyotirīśvara Thakkura, author of the *Varṇaratnākara* (early 14 century A. D.) and Vidyāpati author of the *Kīrtilatā*, the *Dānavākyāvalī*, the *Padāvalī* (15th century A. D.) throw interesting side light on the dress and ornament of the people of Mithilā. They were inhabitants of Tirhut in north Bihar and wrote in the language of Mithilā. They are regarded as great personalities of Mithilā and tried to revive its lost glory. Their works are considered to be the most authentic source material for the study of the life and culture of the people of Mithilā. While describing the meeting place of the hero Jyotirīśvara[107] says that it was provided with a cot on which spread

98 *Harṣa* (Fuhrer). 52. 74; *Kād*. (Ed. P. V. Kane), para 131, 171, 191.

98 *Raghu*. VI. 14; *Ṛtu*. IV. 3; *Vik*. I; *Kum*. II. 64; *Māl*. II. 6; *Raghu* XVI. 50 (*Keyūra*), *Kum*. VII. 69 (*Keyūra*).

100 *Harṣa* (Fuhrer) pp. 51, 190; *Kād*. (Ed. P. V. Kane) paras 131, 182, 191, 194.

101 *Rām*. XI. 92. 9, XIX, 166. 62.

102 *Ṛtu*. II. 20; *Kum*. I. 37; *Raghu*. VI. 43.

103 *Harṣa*. (Furher) 13. 190; *Kād*. (P. V. Kane), paras 142, 149.

104 *Raghu*. VIII. 63; *Kum*. I. 34; *Ṛtu*. III. 27.

105 *Harṣa*. (Fuhrer), 13. 50; *Kād*. (P. V. Kane). paras 142, 191.

106 *Śāk*. I. 22, VI. 97; *Māl*. 263, 323.

107 *V. R*., p. 11, 12, 14, 15.

a *gaddī* (*paṭiā*) covered with purple neta silk (*veṅgaranetaka māṇḍalī*) with silk lining (*asdare*). The *Chādara* or *rezai* (*saphura-saura*) was made from the ruby cloth of Sonāpali (*Sonāpalike maṇikantī*)[108]. After the bath the body of the hero was wiped with a towel (*saphura*) and then he wore silk *dhotī* (*paṭṭa-phera dhotī*), *dupaṭṭā* (*uttarīyapaṭṭa*) and garments of brocaded silk (*devenā-yake*). On a stool by the side of the bed were kept four blankets (*kaṁbala*), five *sakalāts*, ten *kharalas* and twenty *chādaras* (*palī*). Further at the time of coronation the king wore garments of brocaded silk (*deveṅga*).

The *Varṇaratnākara*[109] gives a detailed description of the dress and equipment of a cavalier. The horsemen wore a tunic *jhaṅgā* (coat), *kamarbandha* (*varali*), turban (*pāga*) of dastar type (*dasaraichā*), stockings (*mojā*), riding boots (*sarmojā*), jacket (*gātī*) and *vaghanūhā* (*bāghanakhā*). He also wore breast plates (*kuchaoṭā*) made of iron plates drilled with diamond, a chain head covering (*goāra*), *jhavaka*, *vajaṅgī-vīra-bāhu*, *vagalaichā* (side plates) and cheek plates (*gaṇḍī*). Then finally appears the *kobā* (dress) made of various kinds of silk such as *devā*, *seāṅga*, *sūri*, *senasūri*, *gādīpalī*, *gījīpali*, *sonapali* etc., most of them appear to be named after the places from where they originated. The bowman wore a cornered jāmā (*jhagalā kaniāra*), a turban (*taruḍīpāga*) and a jacket reaching the knees (*vāga*).[110] The dogkeeper, however, wore a silk scarf (*pāṭadhaṭī*) over the head and a tunic (*āṅgī*).[111]

A bard (*bhāṭa*) is described wearing a *māraparikali*, gold bangles, turban (*pāga*) made of *khaḍanā* (*khaṇḍa*-silk), and short *dhotī* made of embroidered Deogiri stuff (Devagiri is modern Daultabad in Aurangabad).[112] A musician (*vidyāvanta*), however, wore a turban of *Gujarapari* silk (*Gujara pariveṭrā*), chādara with huge border (*Safara uccha pāḍhi*); *dhotī* (*pachao*) made of *tārāmaṇḍala* was folded (*dovalakai*) and tied at the waist. He wore a garment made of *makalāka* (silk).[113] He was accompanied by two female

108 *V. R.*, p. 32.
109 *V. R.*, p. 33.
110 *V. R.*, p. 35.
111 *V. R.*, p. 44.
112 *V. R.*, p. 44.
113 *V. R.*, p. 46.

musicians (*vidaotini*) who wore embroidered garments. The dancers wore a skirt (*ghāgharā*) and *kacchanī*.[114] The prostitutes wore attractive coloured garments so as to attract people easily.

The *Varṇaratnākara* gives very little information regarding the female costume. However, at one place a *sakhī* has been described as wearing a tunic resembling with Kāñchīpuram muslin (*Kācivaralī aisana āgaka-āṅgika vāna*).[115] The noble ladies wore extraordinary garments (*vichitrāmbara*).[116] The ordinary people wore a silk *dhotī* (*paṭṭambara*) and a *chādara* (*uttarīyapaṭṭa*)[117].

Jyotirīśvara also gives a long list of different varieties of clothes that were probably used by the people of the Mithilā region. The first list contains thirty kinds of silk cloth (*paṭṭambara*)[118] but strictly speaking some of the stuffs do not appear to be silk cloth. These varieties of silk were *dukūla* (linen or cotton cloth), *kṣauma* (silk or linen), *kauśeya* (made up of cocoon silk), *kanaka-patra* (gold coloured silk or silk with leaf design in gold), *vichitra* (variegated or figured silk or extra-ordinary variety of silk, it resembles with *Vichitrapuri* tie-dyed *sārī* of Orissa), *meghavarṇa* (black silk of Bengal, looking like the colour of cloud), *megha-uduṁbara* (another variety of black silk), *Ṣaram* or Kharm (a variety of red silk), *karppūra*-chauka (silk as white as camphor or chequered camphor white silk), *karppūra-tilaka* (camphor white silk decorated with rosettes), *gaṅgāsāgara* (a fine silk produced in Bengal or gauze silk); it may correspond to *Gaṅgājal* a fine cloth produced by the Sarkar of Barbakabad.[119] *Sūryabandha* (silk decorated with solar pattern or embroidered silk), *gajabandha* (silk embroidered, printed or woven with the figure of elephants and processed in tie-dye technique), *akinavāla* (silk manufactured at Anahilwada in north Gujarat), *devaṅga* (brocaded silk), *sūchipaṭi* (narrow piece of embroidered silk used as *dupaṭṭā*), *pāñchauna* (five-coloured silk), *sonapaṭi* (silk

114 *V. R.*, p. 51.
115 *V. R.*, p. 5.
116 *V. R.*, p. 7.
117 *V. R.*, p. 12.
118 *V. R.*, p. 21; Chaudhary, R. K., *Mithilā in the age of Vidyāpati*, p. 169.
119 *Ain.*, II. 2., p. 124.

of Sonargaon in Dacca), *Gajipali* (silk of Ghazipur, U. P.), *Kadaligarbha* (silk as soft as the interior of the banana tree), *muktāpada* (silk with the brilliance of pearls same as *muktājarī* of Orissa), *mālāvidyādhara* (silk containing a row of flying figures of the heavenly musicians called *Vidyādharas*), *Śrīkaṇṭha* (a variety of silk), *Lakṣmīvilāsa* (poetic name of a variety of silk cloth), *Vichitrāṅgala* (figured silk) and *Chakreśvarī* (a variety of silk from Bengal).

The second list contains the names of country made silk (deśīyapaṭṭavastra).[120] Perhaps these varieties were inferior to *paṭṭambara*. This list includes some varieties of silk which were manufactured in the Mithilā region. Twenty three varieties are mentioned in the list and they are *tañchera* (silk produced in Tanjore), *gaṅgaura* (silk produced in one of the Mithilā regions). *Silhaṭī* (silk produced in Sylhet, East Bengal), *ajayamerū* (silk of Ajmer), *gaṇḍipurī* (silk of Andhra Pradesh), *rājapura* (silk of Rajapur in Goa), *jagadharapur* (silk from Jagadalpur in Madhya Pradesh), *kāñchīvanī* (silk produced in Kanchipuram or Canjeevaram), *cholapāṭana* (silk of Chola country), *dvārasāra* (silk of Dvārasamudra or Hoyasala country), *nira santoṣa* (probably silk from Santosh in East Bengal), *ṣaḍap* (silk manufactured it Kadapah district of Andhra Pradesh), *paṭora* (a variety of local silk), *māṅgala* (silk of Mangalore) or auspicious garment, *pārijāta* (silk having the design of *pārijāta* flower), *maṇi* (a printed variety of silk), *maṇijāta* (another variety of printed silk), *sarvāṅga* (a special variety of silk), *rupamañjarī* (special kind of silk), *sambalaharī* (silk manufactured in Sambalpur, Orissa), *sūryamaṇḍala* (silk with Sun design or red silk), *chandramaṇḍala* (silk with moon design or crescent or white silk design), and *taralamaṇḍala* (blue coloured silk).

The third list contains thirteen varieties of cotton cloth or plain cloth (*nirabhūṣaṇa*).[121] They are *kamaruvāla* (cotton cloth of Kāmarūpa, Assam), *baṅgāla* (cotton cloth of Bengal), *guñjara* (cotton cloth of Gujarat), *kaṭhivāla* (cotton cloth of Kathiawad), *telakaṇṭa* (a cotton cloth), *kāchi* (cotton cloth of Canjeevaram), *nichaḍhi* (a variety of cotton cloth), *jili* (another variety of

120 *V. R.*, p. 22.
121 *V. R.*, p. 22.

cotton cloth), *varahaṭhī* (sari measuring twelve hands), *majhottarī* (sari of medium size), *jhurṇa* (fine muslin; jhuna malamala) and *vapayā* (a variety of cotton cloth).

The *Varṇaratnākara* also refers to the dress of an ascetic which comprised of *kopīna*, *antaravāsa* and *vahiravāsa*. It corresponds to *antaranivasani* and *bahiranivasani* of the Bṛhatkalpasūtrabhāṣya.[122]

The fourth list is entirely devoted to netra silk. It was brown *(hariṇā)*, purple *(vaṅgaṇa)*, dark brown *(nakhi)*, *sarvaṅga*, heavy *(guru)*, bleached or embroidered *(śuchina)*, silvery *(rājena)*, five-coloured *(pañcharaṅga)*, indigo blue *(nīla)*, green *(harita)*, yellow *(pīta)*, red *(lohita)* and variegated *(chitravarṇa)*.[123] Besides these the *Varṇaratnākara* also mentions *sakalāta* which means cloth of foreign origin.

Vidyāpati is another important personality of Mithilā who has given a detailed description of the different kinds of textiles and garments worn by different grades of people. He was a famous poet of Mithilā and as such his works are of immense value for the study of dress and ornament. According to Kīrtilatā in the market of Jaunpur the merchants sold to the Turks camphor, saffron, articles of perfume, *kauris*, *neta* silk and black silk *(kajalāmbara)* favourite of the Turks[124]. The garments made of *neta (netra)* silk *(netakavasana)* is also mentioned in the Vidyāpati's Padāvalī[125]. Blue silk *(nīlapaṭora)* was very much liked by women[126]. In the Kīrtilatā the term *divyāmbara* is mentioned which was probably heavy brocade. The Turks of Jaunpur bought in the market for their use *Khes-Chādar (Sikhisa)*, shoes *(paijjalla)* and stockings *(mojā)*[127]. They spent their spare times in needle work *(kasīdā-Kaḍhanā)*. In the Dānayākyāvalī[128] he has mentioned nine varieties of cloth that were

122 *Bṛhat*. IV. 4084, 4085, 4087-90.
123 *V. R.*, p. 1/2.
124 *Kīrtilatā.*, p. 37.
125 *Padāvalī.*, p. 62 (*Vidyāpati kī padāvalī*, Ed. G. Sinha).
126 *Padāvalī*, p. 26.
127 *Kīrtilatā.*, p. 4", 1, 35. (*Kīrtilatā aura Avahaṭṭabhāṣā*, ed. S. P. Singh).
128 *Dānavākyāvalī.*, pp. 233, 234, 235, 236.

known to the people of this region. They were *karpāsika*, *ṣaroma* or *kharoma*, *kṣauma*, *kauśeya*, *kuśa*, *kṛimija*, *mṛgalomaja*, *vṛkṣatavaka Sambhava* and *āvika*. *Karpāsika* was probably ordinary variety of cotton cloth. This term is noticed in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya[129] and Divyāvadāna[130] but it is not included in the list of different varieties of cloth given by Jyotirīśvara Thakkura. *Ṣaroma* or *Kharoma* was either a variety of red silk or it was manufactured by mixing cotton thread with a different fibre or with silk. It was like artificial silk and was soft like cotton. *Kṣauma* was either a variety of silk or linen and probably it was prepared by *ausī*. In Mithilā the term *tisiauṭā* is still used for such fabrics. *Kauśeya* was a kind of silk obtained from the cocoons spun by the silk worm. This variety of cloth is also referred to in the Divyāvadāna[131]. The terms *kauśeya*, *kṣauma* and *ṣaroma* are also mentioned in the Varṇaratnākara[132]. *Kuśa* cloth was woven from *Kuśa* grass. *Krimija* was probably some kind of silk cloth and was obtained from the cocoons spun by the silk worm just like the *kauśeya* cloth. Pandit Umesh Mishra[133] has suggested that *kauśeya* and *krimija* were two different varieties of silk; *kauśeya* was obtained from special variety of cocoon while *krimija* was obtained direct from the silk worms.[134] *Mṛgalomaja* was obtained from deer skin. *Vṛkṣatavaka Sambhava* was bark garment while *āvika* was a variety of woolen cloth obtained from sheep. This term is also noticed in the Vedic literature. It may be a variety of woolen cloth manufactured in the district of Purnea, as there it is still carried on by the *Gareriaș*. The *Varṇaratnākara*, however, does not mention these varieties of cloth. Thus the foregoing descriptions reveal an unbroken continuity of the art of spinning and weaving in many parts of Mithilā. The ladies of Mithilā even now spin very fine yarn and weave beautiful textiles. Some of them can spin the length of yarn needed for a sacred thread (*Janeu*) and put it in the capsule of a cardamom. This sacred work is generally performed by a group of five married ladies (*sadhavā*). In Madhubani, the core of Mithilā country,

129 *K. A.*, II. 115.
130 *Div.*, pp. 212, 21.
131 *Div.*, p. 316.
132 *V. R.*, p. 21.
133 Mishra, Umesh, *Vidyāpati Thakur*, p. 62.
134 Roy Chaudhary, P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Purnea*, p. 249.

very high quality of textile is manufactured. The Khādi muslin of Madhubani has a great reputation. They produced even silk and woollen cloths.

Vidyāpati has also given a detailed description of different types of dresses worm by different grades of people of the Mithilā region. These details are confirmed by the folk songs now current in Mithilā. A lady while going to meet her lover generally wore either a white silk (*dhawala vastra*), black silk sārī (*shyāmala vasana*) or a blue silk *sārī* (*nīlavastra*).[135] Sometimes trasparent[136] dresses were also worn (*tanūmsuka*). Rādhā also wore a blue silk *sārī* (nīlavasana) or yellow silk sari (*pītāmbara*); but her normal dress was probably a *sārī* and a bodice (*kañchukī*).[137] The deserted ladies, however, wore a while *sārī* while a yoginī wore red garment (*aruṇavasana*).[138] Once Krishna appeared in the garb of a women just to tease the Gopīs and wore red *sārī* and *kañchukī*.[139] This shows that red *sārī* and bodice was the common female attire. Like Kālidāsa, Vidyāpati also refers to seasonal dresses. He says that in *vasanta* ladies wore silken graments.[140] The folk songs actually contain the inner most feeling of the people and in this connection the famous poet Dinakara has rightly observed that *kokaṭi dhotī*, *patuā* leaves and folk songs are some of the remarkable features of the Mithilā region.[141] They throw much light on the dress and ornament of this region. These songs reveal that men wore *dhotī* and *pagaḍī* or *pāga* but a bridegroom wore *pītāmbara*. However, one of the songs describes that Śiva wore a tiger's skin at the time of his marriage.[142] The bride wore yellow silken *sārī* and a multicoloured bodice (*navaraṅga cholī*).[143] The young ladies also wore yellow *sārī* but old women wore red *sārī*.[144] The dress

135 Bhatia and Joshi, *Vidyāpati aura Unakī Padāvalī*, p. 154, 203, 355.
136 *Ibid*. p. 183.
137 Bhatia and Joshi, *Vidyāpati aura unakī Padāvalī*, pp. 323, 325.
138 Ibid. p. 493.
139 Ibid. 495.
140 Ibid. p. . 530.
141 Singh, Ram Ekbal, *Maithili Loka Geeta*, p. 13 (Rakesh).
142 Ibid. p. 28.
143 Rakesh, *Maithili Lokageeta*, p. 156.
144 Ibid, p. 137.

of an young girl was *ghāgharā* and red bodice[145]. Further, it is mentioned in one of the songs that the bodice from Lucknow was liked very much by the ladies and they wore it on special occasions. The aristocratic or rich ladies wore embroidered chundarī, coloured bodice (*kechuā*) while poor ladies wore plain and simple dress[146]. One of the songs[147] of Vidyāpati describes that Nārada who was a Brāhmaṇa by caste always carried with him a *dhotī*, *loṭā* (a pot), *patarā* (*pañchāṅga*) and a book. The bhogi[148], however, wore a short *dhotī* down to the kness leaving the upper part of the body bare, (ear-rings *kuṇḍala*) and a garland in the neck.

Besides the dress and the dress materials various kinds of ornaments are also referred to in the works of Jyotirīśvara Thakkura and Vidyāpati. Further the folk songs of Mithilā are also very helpful for the study of ornaments worn by the people of this region. According to *Varṇaratnākara*[149] female ornaments included *khuṭī* (hair pin), *siṅkalī* (ordinary chain), *sūta* (gold string), *ekāvali* (necklace of one string), *chūṛī* (bangles), *valaya* (bracelet), *mekhalā* (girdle), *ṭīkā* (head ornament), *padamasūtra* (necklace with lotus-shaped pendant), *tavana* (ear-ring), *kaṅkaṇa* (*kaṅgana*) and *nūpura* (anklet). Generally women adorned themselves with a golden chain (*sonāka dora*) and ear-rings (*kuṇḍala*). Most of the above varieties of ornaments were inlaid with diamond (*hīrā*), pearl (*maṇi*), ruby (*māṇika*), gem (*muktā*). They were manufactured out of gold (*suvarṇa*) and silver (*rajata*). This shows that the people of Mithilā possessed various kinds of precious and semi-precious stones and ornaments of gold and silver. Recently Mahārājā of Darbhanga and Babu Chandradhari Singh of Ranti Deodhi have donated to the museums many such articles. Besides, there are many other aristocratic families in Mithilā who are still in possession of precious and semi-precious stones, gold and silver ornaments.

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145 Ibid. pp. 55, 95.

146 Rakesh, *Maithili Lokageeta*, p. 344.

147 *Vidyāpati aura unaki Padāvalī*, Bhatia and Joshi, p. 530.

148 Ibid.

149 *V. R.*, p. 4.

The *Varṇaratnākara* also gives two different lists of precious and semi-precious stones[150] besides the list of different kinds of ornaments. The first list contains the names of precious stones (*ratna* or *maṇi*) and they are *gomeda*, *garuḍodgāra*, *markata*, *mukutā*, *mānrakhaṇḍa*, *padmarāga*, *hīrā*, *renuja*, *mārāsena*, *saugandhika*, *chandrakānta*, *sūryakānta*, *pravāla*, *rajāvarta*, *kaṣāya*, and *indranīla*. The second list contains the names of semi-precious stones (*upamaṇi*) and they are *kūrma*, *mahākūrma*, *ahichhatra*, *śyāvagandha*, *vyomarāga* *kiṭapakṣa*, *kuruvinda*, *sūryamāla*, *haritasāra*, *jīvisu*, *yavajāti*, *śikhinala*, *vaṁsapatra*, *dhulimarkata*, *bhasmāṅga*, *jambukānta*, *sphaṭika*, *karkhetara*, *pāripātra*, *nandaka*, *añjanaka*, *lohitaka*, *śailepaka*, *śuktichūrṇa*, *tuthaka*, *śukagrīva*, *gurulpa*, *pakṣa*, *pītarāga*, *karppūraka*, *varṇarasa* and *kācha*.

The *Varṇaratnākara* further gives the description of the ornaments worn by different classes of people. The prostitutes[151] wore various kinds of ornaments to attract people. The noble ladies[152] wore bracelets (*kakanā*), bangles (*chūṛī*), head ornament (*trikā*), hand rings (*valaya*), chain (*hāra*), gold string (*dorā*) and anklet (*nūpura*) while the dancers[153] wore bangles (*chūṛī*), hand-rings (*valaya*), girdle (*mekhalā*), ear-rings (*kuṇḍala*), anklets (*nūpura*). The traders and merchants[154] were expert in examining the different varieties of precious and semi-precious stones like diamond (*hīrā*), gem (*maṇi*), ruby (*muktā*), gold (*suvarṇa*), silver (*rajata*), copper (*tāmra*), bronze (*kāṁsya*), *jayamata*, lead (*rāṅgā*), brass (*pittalī*). A bard[155] has also been described as learned in the science of gems.

Vidyāpati[156] also gives the names of various kinds of ornaments but they are mentioned by different terms such as *Chandramaṇichūḍā* (moon-shaped head ornament inlaid with gems), *ghuṅgrū* (anklets producing jingling sound), hāra

150 *V. R.*, p. 21.
151 *V. R.*, p. 26.
152 *V. R.*, p. 46.
153 *V. R.*, p. 50.
154 *V. R.*, p. 60.
155 *V. R.*, p. 44.
156 Benipuri, Rambriksha Sharma, *Vidyāpati Ki Padāvalī*, pp. 4, 16, 17, 26, 34, 47, 55, 60; Mishra, Balakrishna, *Maithili Mahākavi Vidyāpati Thakur*, pp. 18, 20–21.

(chain), *maṇikuṇḍala* (ear-ring), *gajamotika hāra* (chain made of gems obtained from elephant), *motimahāra* (pearl chain), *nīvibandha* (girdle), *muktā-hāra* (pearl chain), *valaya* (hand-ring), *maṅgaṭikā* (head ornament), *motikamālā* (hanging necklace of pearls), *kaṅkaṇa* (bracelets), *māṇika-mekhalā* (girdle inset with ruby).

In the folk songs of Mithilā,[157] the neck ornaments are mentioned by the terms *motika-hāra, chandra-hāra, hasulī, motyanlarī, gajamuktā mālā* and *hāra;* the head ornaments are referred to by the terms *kirīṭa* and *mukuṭa :* the nose ornaments have been alluded to by the terms *besara* and *natha;* the ear ornaments are mentioned by the terms *kuṇḍala* and *karṇaphūla;* the hand ornaments are described by the terms *bājūbanda, kaṅkaṇa, kaṅgaṇa, saṅkhachūḍī, valaya,* and *chūḍī,* the waist ornaments are referred to by the terms *nīvibandha* and *mekhalā,* and the leg ornaments have been described by the terms *paiñjanī, kiṅkinī, nūpura* and *kaḍā.* In the Vasanta season ladies wore a necklace and a head ornament. The Yogi[158] wore a garland of *rudrākṣa.* In one of the songs[159] Krishna has been described as wearing a crown *(mukuṭa)* and a *kuṇḍala.* At the time of the svyambara[160] of Sītā, king Janaka had put on a red crown, golden ear-ring inlaid with pearls, golden chain embeded with diamond. The ornaments of bride[161] consisted of a *ṭikā* and *saṅkhachūḍī* while that of the bridegroom[162] comprised of a pearl chain. The golden nose ring was worn by female dancers. Jaṭa[163] wore a *mukuṭa* while Jaṭina[164] wore *maṅgaṭikā, chūḍī, hasulī* (dog-collared necklace)' *sikarī* (golden chain), *kaṇṭhā.* Sometimes *tarakī* (ear-ornament with chain) and *ṭikulī* were also worn by the ladies.[165] The folk songs of

157 Rakesha., *Maithili Loka Geeta*, pp. 28–29, 46, 55–56, 64 65, 76, 92.
158 Rakesha, *Maithili Loka Geeta*, p. 67.
159 Ibid., p. 95.
160 Ibid. p. 137.
161 Ibid. p. 156.
162 Ibid. p. 282.
163 Ibid.
164 Ibid. 230.
165 Ibid. pp. 344, 402.

Mithilā[166] also inform us that ṭikā of Bankipur, *kaṅkaṇa* of Kataka and pearl of Surat were very popular among the women of Mithilā.

Thus various types of dress and ornaments are referred to in the works of Jyotirīśvara Thakkura and Vidyāpati. The practice of wearing different types of dresses and ornaments continued even after the age of Vidyāpati. The present life and customs of Mithilā confirms it. Spinning and weaving is still carried on a large scale by the people of this region. Even now there is a village called Bhauara where more than 1500 weavers are engaged in weaving.[167] There are also many other villages in the districts of Darbhanga, Samastipur, Bhagalpur and Purnea where spinning and weaving work is continuing. They manufacture bed-sheets, *sāris*, *dhotīs*, towels, curtains, shirtings, *kokaṭī* cloth, *maṭakā*, *tasara* and many other varieties of silk. *Kokaṭī* is a special variety of textile which is produced in the Mithilā region. It is greyish in colour and after finishing it looks like silk. This cloth has a country wide reputation. According to O' Malley,[168] coarse cotton cloth called *'phoṭās'* and *bukīs* are woven by the indigenous weaving castes on primitive looms in different parts of the Purnea district, but the industry is now dying out. Cotton carpets and blankets are also manufactured by the people of this region. Dr. Francis Buchanan[169] observes that in the district of Monghyr much of the army clothing were made in the 19th century A. D. for which a large number of tailors were employed. The ladies of Muzaffarpur[170] were expert in making artistic designs on the cloth with shell and other objects, but such handicrafts are also dying out among the ladies at the moment. Further, very fine variety of silk and artificial silk garments are manufactured in the district of Bhagalpur. Now a few government powerlooms are also functioning in these districts particularly at Madhubani, Laheriasarai and Bhagalpur under the Bihar State Handloom Union.[171]

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166 Roy Chaudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Darbhanga*, p. 251-52.
167 Roy Chaudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Purnea*, p. 249.
168 Roy Chaudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Monghyr*, p. 168.
169 Ibid., *Dist. Gaz. Muz.*, p. 36.
170 Ibid., *Dist. Gaz. Dar.*, p. 252.
171 Roy Chaudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Dar.*, p. 111.

The male dress,[172] now generally consits of a shirt or *kurtā* of muslin or silk, a pair of trousers or a *payjāmā* or a *dhotī;* while at home they wear a dhotī or a *luṅgī* or *payjāmā* or a sleeping suit etc. Thus the peculiar Maithila dress is on the decline. Now-a-days many persons wear a Gāndhī cap of cotton in place of pāga, Jawahar-cut banḍī or waist coat as an upper garment. The educated person, however, go out in a pair of trousers or *payjāmā* and a shirt with a hat on or bareheaded and with a walking stick. They also wear bush-shirts. The well-to-do people of Mithilā now wear Payjāmā and a long shirt or *kurtā* or a pair of short pant and a shirt, the two flaps of the shirt being allowed to hang loose on the shorts or being tucked inside them. Sometimes they wear a pair of trousers in combination with a shirt or a half shirt or a bush-shirt. The shirt is tucked underneath the trousers and its sleeves may be rolled up in a band above the elbow. Some persons wear western suit including trousers, shirt, a waist coat and a necktie. On ceremonial occasions they wear *sherawānī* or *achakana* or long coat or prince-coat. It is interesting to note that even Muslims who have settled there wear similar dresses, however, their common garment is *payjāmā* or *dhotī* as lower garment and shirt or *kurtā* as upper garment.

The Maithila Brāhmaṇa wear a *sānchī dhotī, kurtā, mirzai, chādara, or uttarīya* and keeps a *gamachhā* or towel on his shoulder, *sāṭha pāga* over his head and shoes. The peculiar head dress called *pāga*, a twisted or folded chādara worn over the upper part of the body in a peculiar manner, an *achakana* or a long loose *kurtā* with *dhotī* mark out a Maithila paṇḍita. But an orthodox Brāhmaṇa still wears the prescribed dress. In the urban areas the Maithila dress is going out and the *pāgas* are used generally on ceremonial occasions. The changed dress like half pant, full pant, under-wear, ganjee, shirt, *kurtā, dhotī, payjāmā,* long coat, coat etc. have crept in to their daily use. The middle class wear clothes of the same variety as those worn by the rich persons. The labouring and agricultural class[173] are not so neat and clean in their dress because of their poor financial condition.

172 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
173 Roy Chaudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Darbhanga*, p. 110.

The dress of women[174] differs from urban to rural areas. In Mithilā women wear a *sārī* in a peculiar manner. First of all they wear an undergarment called petticoat tied to waist near the navel. Then they wear *sārī*. It is tucked round the waist in a peculiar manner. The peculiarity lies in the manner of tucking the pleats (*koñchā*). The pleats are tucked near the navel on the left side of the waist and one end of the *sārī* (*āñchala*) covers the head. This mode of wearing a *sārī* is common in the rural areas. In the urban areas the *sārī* is worn in the more customary manner. It is tied round the waist with pleats tucked at the navel and one end of it (*āñchala*) covers the head. Previously females wore a *cholī* (a tight short blouse without brassiers) but now *cholī* has been replaced by modern type of blouse with short or long sleeves. The use of brassiers has become very common. Some women, however, simply wear a brassier or short blouse and cover their body with the help of their sārī. Short tight blouse with low-cut neck, and close fitting sleeves upto the elbow or sometimes sleeveless revealing the region about the lower ribs is coming into fashion.

The boys[175] wear shirt, *kurtā, gañjee, payjāmā,* half pant, bush shirt etc. Previously they wore a *langoṭī,* a lion cloth, a *gañjee* or a *kurtā* but it has now changed.

The girls[176] wear a frock, *jāñghiā, shālwār, ghāghrā,* blouse etc. but the grown up girls wear *sārī,* petticoat, blouse, *shālwār,* frock, *dupaṭṭā* etc. Now they have started wearing bush-shirt and trousers or *payjāmā.*

Various types of ornaments[177] were worn by the ladies of Mithilā but now it is decreasing. Formerly the ornaments were used even by male persons. There is a vide difference between ornament used by the urban and the rural people as also by the rich and the poor. There is difference in the types and designs of ornaments as used by men and women and by boys and girls. Aristocratic ladies in the urban areas wear delicate ornaments of gold and pre-

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174 *Ibid.* pp. 11-112.

175 Roy Chaudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Dar.*, p. 112.

176 *Ibid.*

177 *Ibid.* p. 113.

cious stones but rich ladies in the villages wear mostly solid gold ornaments but for the feet they use silver ornaments. Poor women, however, wear ornaments of silver and brass.

The male persons[178] wear chain (*sikarī*), ring (*aṅguṭhī*), armlet (*ananta*). The Maithila Brāhmaṇas wear round ring of gold (*kanausī*). But now the fashion of wearing ornaments by men is declining. The female folk[179] were *maṅgṭikā* or *ṭikā* on the head; *bālī, makarī, kanpāsā, jhumkā, kuṇḍala, kanausī* on the ears; *nakeli, bulākī, nathiā, lavaṅga kā phool* on the nose, *sūta (hasulī)*, *sikarī* (chain), *maṭaramālā, necklace, chakatī, kaṇṭhā, kanaili* on the neck; *bājū, katawī, ananta, bālā, cūḍī* on the hands; *daurkas* and *kamardhanī* on the waist; *pāyala, kaḍā-chhara* on the feet and *aṅguṭhī* on the fingers. The children[180] wear *bālī*, chain and light *bālā*.

Thus we may conclude that Mithilā is really very rich and prosperous part of the State of Bihar. It has definitely a rich cultural heritage.



178 Roy Chaudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gaz. Dar.*, p. 113.

179 Ibid.

180 Ibid.

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